



# EmployeeUPDATE

*Our Mission: To serve the people of North Carolina by enabling individuals, families and communities to be healthy and secure, and to achieve social and economic well-being.*

A monthly publication for employees of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

## Asthma Awareness Month



May 6 is World Asthma Day, and the United States has named May as "Asthma Awareness Month" to bring attention to this widespread chronic disease.

Many people in North Carolina suffer from asthma. More than 7 percent of adults and more than 18 percent of children are affected by asthma in North Carolina. In 2006, 123 North Carolinians died due to asthma. African Americans, Native Americans, women, the elderly and children are among the groups most affected by asthma.

Asthma is one of the most common chronic diseases affecting the lungs. An asthma attack occurs due to inflammation of the airways. During an asthma attack, the airways become smaller and less air passes in and out of the lungs, causing wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and nighttime or early morning coughing.

There are indoor and outdoor "triggers" that can lead to asthma attacks. Avoiding or reducing exposure to these triggers can help control asthma. Some of the more common triggers are:

- Cockroaches and other pests
- Dogs, cats or other animals
- Dust mites
- Secondhand smoke or smoke from burning wood or paper
- Strong smells
- Molds
- Air pollution
- Weather changes or very cold air
- Colds or flu
- Exercise

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WORKING TOGETHER FOR  
STRONG, HEALTHY  
AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

# Older Americans Month

MAY 2008



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Administration on Aging  
[www.aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov)

  
NORTH CAROLINA  
Division of Aging  
and Adult Services

NEW

# THE Cultural Competency CORNER

*By Gloria Sánchez, Latino Public Information Officer*



*I would like to take this opportunity to present this new column, "The Cultural Competency Corner," and to introduce myself as the new Latino Public Information Officer with the DHHS Office of Public Affairs.*

*I grew up in Mexico City and moved to North Carolina 18 years ago. In 1993, I graduated from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill with a major in radio, television and motion pictures and a minor in French. And yes, I am a Tar Heel fan.*

For the past 15 years, I have been very involved working with the Latino media and community organizations across the state. My previous job with the North Carolina Healthy Start Foundation gave me the wonderful opportunity to learn a lot about public health and to strengthen my social marketing skills. As the Latino communications campaign manager, I created diverse Spanish print materials, radio and television public service announcements, and educational videos. I was the editor of *Maternidad Latina*, an English electronic newsletter aimed at improving communication between health and social professionals and Latino women. During the five years I worked with N.C. Healthy Start, I also had the opportunity to assist with conferences on racial and ethnic disparities and to present on effective ways to reach out and serve Latinos.

But that's enough about me. I am telling you all of this simply because

I want to let you know that I have the skills to be a resource for your division in your efforts to reach out to Latinos. And I would be more than glad to help you brainstorm creative and effective ways to connect with this growing population.

When I was faced with the task of continuing to write the column that my friend Jail Isa began, "¡Salud and Saludos!", I thought that an effective way to connect with you was to create a new space to broaden our knowledge of the diverse populations where we live, work and serve.

As North Carolina's population becomes more diverse, the growing need to provide culturally competent health and social services becomes evident. More and more, health and human service providers must operate in cross-cultural contexts. Proper preparation is necessary to effectively prevent, identify, and treat many health and social problems.

But what does "cultural competency" mean and why is it important? Cultural competency means to be more aware of our own and others' cultural beliefs and practices and to be more responsive to the needs of those whom we work with and serve. This process translates into improving our ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures and backgrounds and to provide better services to our community.

In the coming issues, I will begin to explore different cultural competency components that can help us develop the ability to understand, communicate, and effectively interact with people across cultures. Please feel free to send me any ideas or topic suggestions at [Gloria.Sanchez@ncmail.net](mailto:Gloria.Sanchez@ncmail.net) or 919.733.9190 ext. 238. I look forward to hearing from you! ■

¡Hasta pronto!  
Gloria Sanchez

**Asthma Awareness Month cont.  
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- Acid reflux disease
- Certain medications
- Some foods
- Emotional anxiety or stress.

Triggers are different for each person, so people with asthma should work with their health care providers to develop an effective management and treatment plan, called an asthma action plan.

The North Carolina Asthma Program and its largest partner, the Asthma Alliance of North Carolina (AANC), have developed a five-year State Asthma Plan to address the issues of asthma. Their annual Asthma Summit on April 17 provided an excellent opportunity for asthma champions throughout North Carolina to showcase success stories and share plans for dealing with asthma in their communities.

Asthma will be the topic on an OPEN/Net cable television broadcast with the N.C. Agency for Public Telecommunications (APT) on Tuesday May 13, at 9:00 p.m. You are invited to join the discussion during that program. To find your local cable channel that carries OPEN/net, go to the APT web site at [www.ncapt.tv/local.htm](http://www.ncapt.tv/local.htm).

For more information about asthma and the N.C. Asthma Program, see [www.asthma.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.asthma.ncdhhs.gov). ■

## **Jeff Horton named acting director of DHSR**



Jeff Horton

Secretary Dempsey Benton announced late last month that Jeff Horton would assume duties on May 1 as acting director of the Division of Health Service Regulation.

“In his service as chief operating officer for the division, Jeff has shown that he has the leadership and skills needed to oversee operations of this diverse division and its many components,” Benton said. “He has a keen perspective for the role of the division within DHHS, as well as the role of each section within the division.”

Benton made the appointment to follow the retirement of Bob Fitzgerald who has served as division director since 2001. Fitzgerald’s retirement was effective May 1.

“I am humbled by the appointment, and look forward to continuing our efforts to see that the people of North Carolina receive appropriate care in safe facilities,” Horton said.

Horton has worked in state government for 20 years, and within the division since 1993 as a long-term care surveyor and a hospital surveyor. He managed regulatory programs involving nursing facilities, hospitals, home care, home health, hospice, dialysis and mental health facilities. In 2006, he was named chief operating officer of the division.

He received a B.S. in food, nutrition and institutional management from East Carolina University in 1984, and an M.S. in nutrition from ECU in 1993. In 2001, he completed a strategic leadership course for state executives at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government.

Horton served last year as president of the national Association for Health Facility Survey Agencies, and currently serves on the association’s board of directors. The association has representatives from all 50 states and is the only organization focused on serving health care regulatory agencies involved in facility licensing and Medicare/Medicaid survey and certification matters. ■



## Dr. Marcus Plescia to lead the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors

The Board of the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) has appointed Dr. Marcus Plescia as the organization's acting president for 2008.

Dr. Plescia is the Chronic Disease Director for the state of North Carolina and heads the Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Branch of the Division of Public Health.

NACDD is a national public health association founded in 1988 to provide a national forum for chronic disease prevention and control efforts by linking the chronic disease program



Dr. Marcus Plescia

directors of each state and U.S. territory. NACDD works to reduce the impact of chronic diseases on the American population by advocating for preventative policies and programs, encouraging knowledge sharing, and developing partnerships for health promotion.

NACDD's areas of concern include arthritis, breast and cervical cancer, cardiovascular health, comprehensive cancer, diabetes, health disparities, healthy aging, obesity, osteoporosis, physical activity, school health, tobacco control, vision and eye health, and women's health. ■

## Division of Aging and Adult Services recognized

The Division of Aging and Adult Services was recognized by the N.C. Association on Aging at their annual spring conference with a special "Exceptional Service Award."

DAAS Director Dennis Streets is pictured here with the award that reads, "Exceptional Service Award presented to the N.C. Division of Aging and Adult Services in recognition of exemplary dedication, support and assistance to the N.C. Association on Aging."

In presenting this award, the current NCAOA Board president Rick Eldridge of Rufty-Holmes



Senior Center in Rowan County expressed how very much the aging and adult services network appreciates the work of the division. ■

# DHHS WELLNESS INITIATIVE

## Confused about exercise?

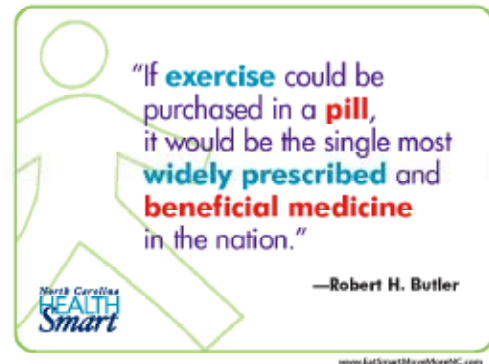
*Our guest columnist this month is Dee Dee Downie, MPH. DeeDee is a CDC Prevention Specialist Fellow working in the Chronic Disease and Injury Section of the N.C. Division of Public Health.*

Do you think that you have to work up a sweat to “count” your activities as exercise or wondered if exercise is the same as physical activity? Are you unsure about how much exercise you need every day to be physically fit?

### Are exercise and physical activity the same?

Actually, exercise and physical activity are similar, but not quite the same.

- **Physical activity** is any movement that is produced by moving muscles. This includes walking, running, basketball, walking the dog, yard work, or taking the stairs.
- **Exercise** is physical activity that is planned or structured to improve or maintain physical fitness related to aerobic fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility or body composition. Physical fitness is the ability to perform physical activities that require aerobic fitness, endurance, strength or flexibility. Examples of exercise include running, lifting weights, and stretching.



### What are the benefits of physical activity?

Regular physical activity is necessary to achieve physical fitness. It can bring many health benefits, including lower total blood cholesterol, reduced risk of developing high blood pressure, and reduced risk of developing coronary heart disease and stroke. Regular physical activity can also help achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

### How much physical activity do I need?

Physical activity does not have to take a long time to provide some benefit. Participating in moderate-intensity activities (like gardening or waxing your car) is part of a healthy lifestyle for people of all ages. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that individuals also include cardio or aerobic activities along with resistance, strength-building, and weight-bearing activities:

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## DHHS Wellness Initiative cont. from page 6

**Cardio or aerobic activities**

A minimum of 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per day (such as brisk walking) most days of the week

OR

A minimum of 20 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity (such as jogging or running) 3 days a week

**Resistance, strength-building, and weight-bearing activities**

Two days a week, incorporate strength training into your routine. Strength-training activities such as weight-lifting maintain and increase muscle strength and endurance. A goal to reach towards is completing 6-8 strength-training exercises, with 8-12 repetitions per exercise.

**Go for the burn!**

Some physical activities burn more calories than others. In the charts below are the average calories a 154-pound person will burn, per hour, for a variety of activities. (A lighter person will burn fewer calories; a heavier person will burn more.) As you would probably guess, *vigorous*-intensity activities burn more calories than *moderate*-intensity activities.

<b>Moderate Physical Activity</b>	<b>Calories burned per hour</b>
Hiking	370
Light yard work	330
Dancing	330
Golf	330
Bicycling (less than 10 mph)	290
Walking (3.5 mph)	280
Stretching	180

<b>Vigorous Physical Activity</b>	<b>Calories burned per hour</b>
Running/jogging	590
Bicycling (more than 10 mph)	590
Swimming	510
Aerobics	480
Walking (4.5 mph)	460
Heavy yard work	440
Basketball	440

**Opportunities at work for staying physically active**

It's easier to stay physically active over time if you take advantage of everyday opportunities to move more. For example, use the stairs—both up and down—instead of the elevator. Start with one flight of stairs and build up to more. You can also park a few blocks away from the office and walk the rest of the way.

**Motivation-makers**

Becoming physically active is the first step in a healthy fitness plan. Now comes the more challenging part—staying active. After a while, it may be tempting to put off that regular walk or bike ride, especially when you are busy. It is very important to stay physically active over time. Here are some tips for making physical activity an enjoyable and habitual part of your life:

- **Think short-term as well as long-term.** If your long-term goal is to walk 1 mile, then make your short-term goal much smaller. How about walking a quarter mile during the first week?

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**DHHS Wellness Initiative cont. from page 7**

- **Share your activity goals with others.** Encouragement from family and friends can help motivate you to stay active. Let others know your short-term goals as well as your long-term ones, so they can regularly cheer you on! And who knows—you may be able to persuade family or friends to join in with you!
- **Help yourself remember.** You may want to stay active, but sometimes forget your fitness sessions because, well, life gets busy. Leave your sneakers near the door to remind yourself to walk, or bring a change of clothes to work and head straight for the gym or walking trail on the way home. Make a personal activity checklist and stick it in a spot where you will see it daily. ■



**Eat Smart, Move More Health Tip**



## Tame the Tube—and Get Moving

Many of us say we don't have time for physical activity, yet we spend 3 to 4 hours in front of the TV. Not only are we inactive while watching television, we often snack on high-calorie foods at the same time. Trade TV time for physical activity. Walk or bike with your family after dinner. By planning TV time, you'll have more time for physical activity.

For more tips on how to tame the tube where you live, learn, earn, play and pray, visit

[www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com](http://www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com)





# Adoption Profile

## Introducing Tareic

Tareic is a charming young man with a great deal of tenacity and courage. He is relatively open with his feelings and expresses himself in a respectful way. He has terrific manners and is nearly always polite. Tareic is a great athlete and enjoys playing most sports, particularly basketball. Going to the beach, to the mall, to the movies, and swimming are other activities that Tareic enjoys. He would like to be a professional basketball player, a police officer, or create video games when he grows up.

Tareic attends special educational classes at school where he is better able to stay focused and comply with the rules of conduct. He attends counseling to help him learn more appropriate methods of expressing his feelings and frustrations. He has made a great deal of progress with this and the majority of the time he is compliant and courteous.



Tareic, b. September 3, 1991

## A Family for Tareic

Tareic requires an adoptive family that can devote a great deal of attention to him and provide him with structure and consistency. He enjoys the company of other children and would prefer to have a brother or sister. With the support and encouragement of his current foster family, Tareic has shown that he is ready to be part of a permanent, loving family.

For more information on this child or adoption and foster care in general, call NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network toll-free at 1-877-NCKIDS-1 (1-877-625-4371). ■